

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. FORBES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FORBES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

PRIORITIZING APPROPRIATION MEASURES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I take this time to really question what we are doing today by bringing up legislative appropriations.

Mr. Speaker, when I was home this weekend, people were going crazy saying, what do you mean there is going to be a train wreck? There is going to be a huge train wreck and all sorts of people who are Federal employees may be asked to be furloughed forever, who knows for how long; to go without pay, and benefits could be cut off. We are going to look so silly, because never has Congress, in the entire history I remember, been so late in dealing with the 13 funding bills that are absolutely essential. Here we are, it is September, the money runs out September 30, and not one bill has been passed.

Mr. Speaker, the shocker is, guess who is not going to be hurt by this train wreck? Us. This is the imperial Congress in spades, and this is wrong. Because the only bill of those 13 bills ready for action today and ready to move to the President's desk is the legislative appropriations.

Think how that looks to the American people, that while we could not get around to doing the other 12 bills, and while we are later doing these bills than any other Congress in history, and that this country may look very, very silly as we go through all of these throes of shutting down Government and all of the costly additions that we know that costs. I had the Government Accounting Office do a study on how much that cost the last time we did it, and we did it just for a few days. Well, it ended up costing almost a half a billion dollars. For a country with the kind of debt we have, that is a stupid way to spend money.

So here we are, Mr. Speaker, a Congress who has not gotten its work done on time, who has not done any of the 13 bills, but today, we are going to take up our pay, our staff's pay, and the pay of the other body, because heaven forbid, we would not want to be hurt by this train wreck that is coming. This is the way we untie ourselves from the rail.

Now, the prior gentleman gave a very good speech down in the well talking about the gift ban. That is another reason that I think that we are taking this up with such haste today, because we do not want to deal with the issues around the gift ban. We have dealt with them before, we know what they are,

this House has passed them before. But if we can hurry this thing through as the very first thing that is done in this body, just as people are getting off planes and coming back, they will not realize that they have just exempted themselves from the act that is going to fall on folks, and that we do not have to deal with the ugly issues because people are not informed and will not know to vote no on the previous question and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, the people in my district came to the rally yesterday because I introduced a bill saying, I want to change the rules of the House so that we never pass the funding for the House and the Senate until we have passed the funding for every other branch of Government. This running up and saying, exempt us, keep us out of the way, is wrong, and we ought to change that rule.

Now, I know that putting this resolution in today is not going to work, because you already have it on the schedule and here it is, boom, boom, gone, over. But we really have to say that in an era where the people were promised reform, this was going to be a different Congress and so forth, we look like the most imperial of the imperial Congresses.

In my district there are many, many people who work for the Federal Government, and I think after the Oklahoma bombing, many Americans realize, these people look just like their neighbors. We should stop calling them bureaucrats and curl our lip as we do it. These are families that live in our communities that are trying to make ends meet. As I introduced this at a rally, they all said yes. They could not believe that we would have the audacity to take ourselves out of this train wreck and to do it as the first order of business when we came back.

They also went on to ask all sorts of questions which I could not answer, were they going to be impacted, what about their children in school, what about their mortgage payment, how long were they going to be furloughed, would they get back pay? And to all of those questions I had to say, "You know, I do not know, because Congress has not finished its work on any of the 13 bills. But the good news is, today we will have finished work on our pay."

That did not go over well. They like my new rule. I cannot get it passed at this late date. I just cannot believe the brazenness of our doing this first, taking care of ourselves first. I hope every Member of this body thinks about how this is going to look, if we rush in here after the break, and the first thing we make sure of is that we take care of ourselves, and then we go on to let everybody else dangle out there in all of this anxiety of which agencies will be chopped, which ones will not, who will be on furlough, when will people be called back.

Think of what we would say if another country's parliament did this. Think of what we would say if we

watched France or Germany shut down because they could not act. Well, that is what they are going to say about us.

I certainly hope we do not do this today. I urge Members to get on the resolution. But, better yet, vote "no" today, and let us get on with dealing with the rest of the business before we put ourselves first. That is not reform, that is the same old business, only even worse. I have never seen that happen before.

Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution that requires Congress to consider and pass all other appropriations before voting on the legislative branch appropriations.

This year Congress has not finished any of the 13 appropriations bills. Never has Congress been this derelict. My bill is needed to force Congress to act responsibly rather than playing politics by threatening to shut down the Government. It will prevent what has been called the train wreck.

If Congress isn't tied to the tracks, then they are much freer to play fast and loose with everyone else's lives.

It is outrageous that the first appropriations bill to pass is funding for Congress. The message this sends to every household in America is that we will take care of ourselves but everyone else is nonessential.

The imperial Congress is alive and well. If you thought the Republicans were reformers, you're wrong. This shouldn't surprise most Americans. It is always the little guy who gets the raw end of the deal when Congress plays politics.

Shutting down the Federal Government wastes money. In 1991 the General Accounting Office estimated that as much as \$607.3 million was wasted during the 3-day 1990 Columbus Day shutdown. In my district a shutdown will cost \$10 to \$15 million a day.

The rest of the world will laugh. Imagine what Americans would say if another country shut down their government because their parliament failed to pass funding bills.

Oklahoma City showed us our neighbors are Federal workers trying to do the best job possible. Playing politics with their lives while exempting Congress and their staff from any pain is the most demoralizing act imaginable.

Stop the book tours and get to work on the huge backlog of appropriations bills. And don't pay yourselves until you do. That's what my bill proposes. Please back it.

A MESSAGE FROM CONSTITUENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I also was home this weekend and also for the entire month of August, and being home for the entire month of August, it really hit me about what is wrong with Washington, DC. There is such a disconnect between the inside-the-beltway-mentality and out-side-the-beltway-mentality that I found it absolutely staggering.

No sooner had I left Washington, DC, and touched down in my district than I started hearing day in and day out that people in my district and, in fact, my